



Building Bridges of Faith Against Domestic Violence

Project d/dl/ድልድል Annual Conference 19-20 June 2024

Post-conference Survey

Background

The conference was in person only and was attended by about 80 participants from at least 15 different organisations, the majority working in DVA services provision in the UK, and catering to diverse faith communities. Organisations and initiatives represented at the conference included the Faith and VAWG Coalition, Respect, Restored, Safe in Faith, Imams Against Domestic Violence, AMINA, FORWARD, Black Churches Domestic Abuse Forum, Sikh Women's Aid, Coaction Hub (a partnership between Standing Together & Asian Women's Resource Centre), the Dahlia Project (delivered by Peterborough Women's Aid and evaluated by Dr Mirna Guha at Anglia Ruskin University), EMIRTA Research, Training and Development Institute in Ethiopia, Fnot Psychosocial Counselling Charitable Organization in Ethiopia, and others. Numerous universities from the UK and South Africa were also represented in the room.

Survey Method

This survey that was administered online via Survey Monkey and consisted of eight questions, mostly multiple choice and yes/no questions, with respondents being asked to add direct testimonials and examples where appropriate.

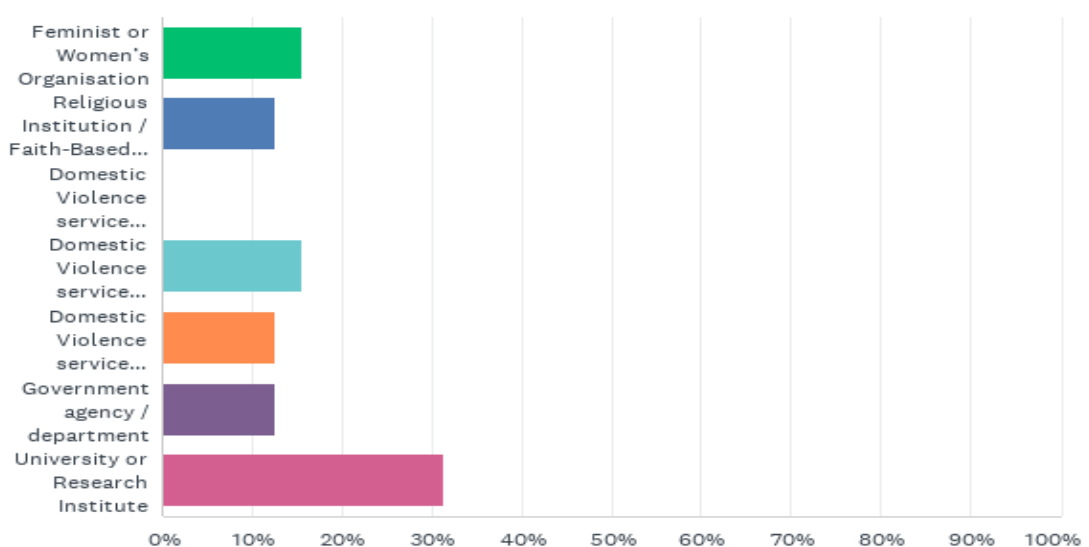
Survey Results

In total, 34 responses were received, which comprises approximately 42.5% of all conference participants. Hence, while the results are not representative of all participants, it expresses the views of close to half of them. Among these, 79% percent attended on both days, about 18% only the first day and about 3% only the second day.

The post-conference survey evidenced a representation of diverse backgrounds and ethnicities at the conference. Among the 30 participants who responded to this question, the majority were of Asian (about 27%), Black (about 33%) and White (40%) ethnicity.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Bangladeshi	0.00% 0
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Chinese	3.33% 1
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Indian	6.67% 2
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Pakistani	13.33% 4
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Other Asian	3.33% 1
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African: African	23.33% 7
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African: Caribbean	6.67% 2
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African: Other Black	3.33% 1
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: White and Black Caribbean	0.00% 0
White: English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British	30.00% 9
White: Irish	0.00% 0
White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0.00% 0
White: Roma	0.00% 0
White: Eastern European	10.00% 3
TOTAL	30

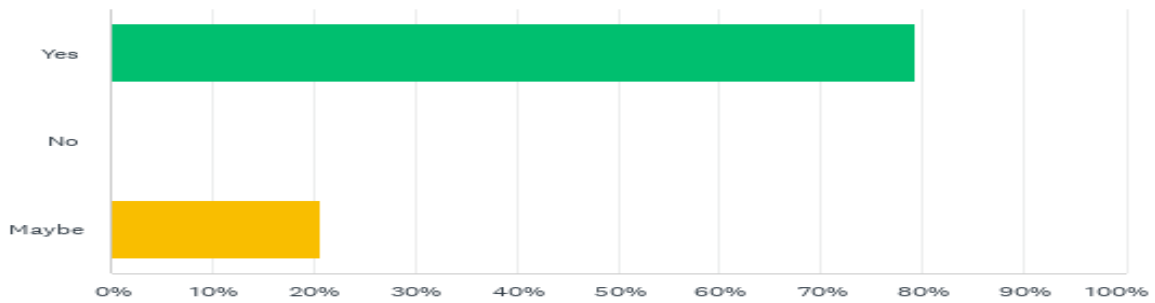
Among the 32 respondents who answered this question, about 31% were from research institutions/universities, about 16% from feminist and women’s organisations, about 16% from domestic violence charity services serving all groups, 12.5% from ‘by and for’ DVA services, 12.5% from government and 12.5% from religious institutions.



On a scale 1-5 (1= met them somehow and 5=met them in full), the conference met the 34 respondents’ expectations with a 4.4 rating.



Among the 34 respondents, 80% said that the conference would inform their future work, practice or approach and about 20% replied ‘maybe.’

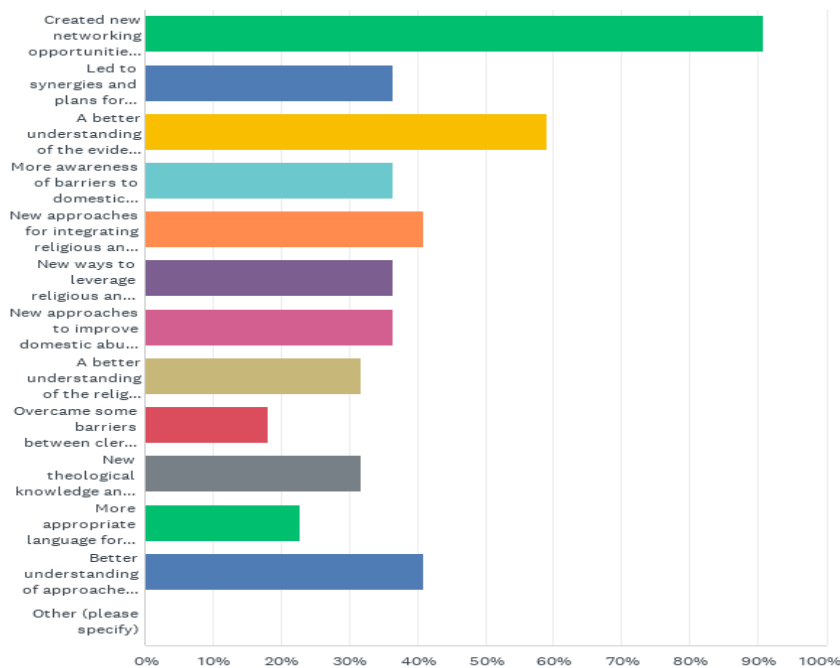


The conference proved beneficial for the participants in many ways. When asked to identify the one way in which the conference benefited them the most, among the 34 respondents 50% reported that it created new networking opportunities and about 12% reported that it led to synergies and plans for future collaboration (within and beyond the sector).

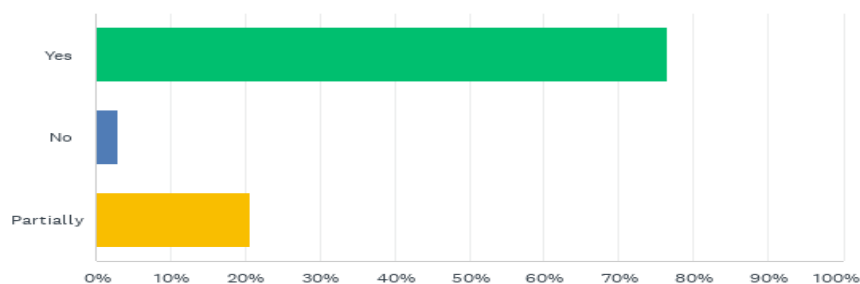
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
None of the above	0.00% 0
Created new networking opportunities (such as with policy makers, researchers, religious stakeholders, domestic violence service providers and/or non-UK specialists)	50.00% 17
Led to synergies and plans for future collaboration (within and beyond your sector)	11.76% 4
A better understanding of the evidence on domestic violence, religion and migration	8.82% 3
More awareness of barriers to domestic violence services faced by migrant and ethnic minority faith communities	5.88% 2
New approaches for integrating religious and cultural diversity in domestic violence work	8.82% 3
New ways to leverage religious and cultural resources and mediators in addressing domestic violence in faith communities	0.00% 0
New approaches to improve domestic abuse services provision for migrant and ethnic minority faith communities	0.00% 0
A better understanding of the religion - culture binary and how it plays out in domestic violence experiences	0.00% 0
Overcame some barriers between clerics (priests, imams. etc.) and domestic violence service providers	0.00% 0
New theological knowledge and tools to respond to domestic violence	2.94% 1
More appropriate language for addressing domestic violence in migrant and ethnic minority faith communities	5.88% 2
Better understanding of approaches in faith-sensitive counselling	5.88% 2
TOTAL	34

When asked to choose all the ways in which the conference benefited them, among the 22 respondents who answered this question, 90% identified that it created networking opportunities, 59% that it led to a better understanding of the evidence on domestic violence,

religion and migration, 41% that it led to new approaches for integrating religious and cultural diversity in domestic violence work, 41% that it led to a better understanding of approaches in faith-sensitive counselling, with the other categories achieving between 18-36%.



Among 34 respondents, about 76% said that the work of Project dIdI/ድልድል and the specific conference successfully contributed to move forward conversations around faith-sensitive and culturally appropriate DVA responses.



Participants were asked to explain how the conference achieved this through examples. The table below lists their responses:

"The presentations, networking and sharing was truly amazing, the only challenge was the hours and needed more time for questions."

"There was a lot of shared learning and getting to know about faith and how important it is within VAWG sector and linking with faith actors and partners and how much its needed, the work to be done and so many challenges."

"We made a lot of connection with academics and agencies so building partnership."

"There were lots of great examples and experience of methods of engaging with faith communities, and collaboration."

"Inspired me with new ideas in the area, initiated new partnership."

"The research evidence and shared practice have been very helpful and will validate and strengthen our existing work on engaging with religious leaders as well, in addition to exploring new partnerships."

"The shared research will inform our own work and local non-academic research carried out within our community."

"I have set myself actions to achieve in the next 12 months. I hope to update you on at next year's conference :-). One is to contact the faith organisation group we have contact with and be part of their meetings to look at how to implement my learning from the conference into how they look at safeguarding and domestic abuse."

"So much reinforced what we believe, but it has been great to network and think creatively about how to collaborate with local services."

"I do believe that the work of Project dIdI/ ٤٨٤٨ and the annual conference have significantly contributed to advancing conversations around faith-sensitive and culturally appropriate responses to domestic violence. The annual conference provided a crucial platform for sharing knowledge, experiences, and best practices among experts, practitioners, and community leaders. Such gatherings foster collaboration and create opportunities for developing more effective strategies that are sensitive to the cultural and faith dynamics at play in different communities."

"The conference was an important step in bringing people together to discuss these important issues. The conference has sparked a debate, which is a great step forward. Now, it's important to build on this momentum by creating a community of practice focused on addressing these issues."

“Gathering different actors together and shar[ing] each other’s knowledge.”

“Provided the evidence, the partnerships as well as the space for critical conversations to happen.”

Recommendations offered by the respondents

The conference participants were invited to let the organisers know what more would need to be done to move the conversations forward to promote culturally appropriate and faith-sensitive responses in DVA services provision. Those who responded offered the suggestions below:

“Dialogue needs to be opened up to the diverse cultural groups.”

“Need for more representation of faith leaders and the issue of Domestic abuse as they are not doing anything much more representation of minoritized faith. There was very limited participation from White led sector. They need to attend and understand these issues of funding taken by white led agencies, linking with faith sector, and faith sector linking with VAWG sector, acknowledging the SOAS protests outside, because all oppressions are inter-connected, as I felt there was this weird gap and not acknowledging impact of colonization on women and girls in Gaza.”

“It is amazing to have such diverse voices in the room of faith and DVA. More could be done to include faith groups with older histories of migration; African/Caribbean, Roma communities: Church leaders; advocates and victims/survivors.”

“There needs to [be] more participants who are faith leaders or leaders of faith-based institutions.”

“Needs to be translated into how particular agencies translate this into practice i.e. Local Authorities.”

“I think it will have created conversations. However, I would have liked more of a focus on how all the research presented will practically influence service providers. It’s important that research doesn’t just stay as research.”

“A fair representation of practicing spiritual groups.”

“More interactive sessions and more space for Q&A.”

“Including more religious groups.”

While some of these comments can be responded to directly, others will need to be reflected on for the future not only by the organisers, but anyone involved in DVA and faith work.

For instance, it could be noted that the aim of this particular conference was to bring different stakeholders together to explore pathways for improving cultural and religious sensitivity in DVA services. This was largely achieved, as this survey also evidenced, but it should be noted that the event was in person and that attendance was limited to 100 people. This meant that the organising team had to be very strategic and conservative with the targeted invitations that it sent out to speakers (registration was open to anyone). In the room, the spiritual representation included Anglican, Protestant and Pentecostal Christians, Eastern and Oriental Orthodox Christians, Muslims (of several traditions), Jews, Sikhs and many others. Given the restriction in the total number of attendees, this can be considered a diverse representation. A future event that would only engage religious stakeholders could focus on bringing together all the religious groups represented in the UK.

The recommendation to see how the research presented has or will influence practice is important and, indeed, raises the need for a longitudinal view on the outcomes of all research and the conference itself. It should be observed, however, that much of the research presented by Project dIdI/ᠠᠠᠠᠠ and other speakers at the conference was either informed by practical experience or informed the design of DVA interventions and programmes in turn. In other words, most projects combined robust research with programme and intervention design, or practice with research-based evaluation, overcoming an assumed divide between research and practice. There is clearly more room to assess how some of the research and programme results presented at the project will inform future practice and approaches, specifically statutory practices, but this can only be captured in due time and through research that is intentionally designed with this aim in mind. The organisers plan to distribute another survey 6 months after the conference to assess any long-term impact that may emerge from this conference.

The participant commenting on Gaza may have not been present during the opening introduction by Dr Romina Istratii, which acknowledged various on-going conflicts, including in Ethiopia, Gaza and Ukraine, and the suffering and abuses taking place in these conflicts and inviting a moment of silence for the lives lost. Dr Istratii also acknowledged the protests taking place at SOAS and invited participants to explore the links between the suffering and abuses witnessed in these conflicts and the issues of domestic violence, migration or displacement and faith. The project has already secured funding to promote a more transboundary approach to DVA that sees the DVA as one type of violence along the ‘continuum of violence’

that victims and survivors may experience when escaping conflict or being displaced by it, in transit and upon arrival in a host society.